

11

determining whether a finger positioned over the activated area has been lifted and replaced on the activated area; and

if the finger has been lifted and replaced on the activated area, switching focus to an object positioned substantially under the pointer. 5

3. The method according to claim 1 wherein step (e) comprises the following step:

opening the object positioned substantially under the pointer. 10

4. The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of:

positioning the pointer substantially over the area on the touchscreen. 15

5. The method according to claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

designating at least two areas of the touchscreen under the portion of the hand as the virtual pointing device; and assigning at least one separate command to each area, whereby the area is activated by unique movement of the second portion of the hand. 20

6. The method according to claim 5 wherein the first area is under the thumb and the second area is under a finger.

7. The method according to claim 1 wherein step (e) comprises the step of determining if a finger has been lifted and replaced twice on the activated area within a specified amount of time. 25

8. The method according to claim 7 wherein the specified amount of time comprises two seconds. 30

9. The method according to claim 5 further comprising the steps of:

determining which area was activated by the second portion of the hand; and

executing the command assigned to the activated area. 35

10. A computer apparatus, having at least a processor, memory, and touchscreen, for creating a virtual pointing device, comprising:

means for detecting a hand placed on the touchscreen; 40

means for designating at least one area of the touchscreen under at least a portion of the hand as the virtual pointing device, wherein said at least a portion of the hand is in substantial contact with said at least one area;

in response to movement of the portion of the hand across the touchscreen in a first direction and at a first speed while the portion of the hand remains in substantial contact with the touchscreen, moving the area in substantial accordance with the movement of the portion of 45

12

the hand, wherein the virtual pointing device is moved in substantial accordance with the movement of the portion of the hand, further wherein said portion of said hand remains in substantial contact with said at least one area during the movement of the portion of the hand, said at least one area and said virtual pointing device being only displayed on said touchscreen which is in contact with said portion of said hand;

means for positioning a pointer on the touchscreen, wherein said pointer is separate from said virtual pointing device and is disposed outside said at least one area, such that movement of the portion of the hand on the touchscreen in the first direction causes the pointer to move in the first direction; and

in response to activating the area by at least a second portion of the hand, means for executing at least one command on an object or text positioned substantially under the pointer.

11. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing a computer system, having a processor, memory, and touchscreen, to create a virtual pointing device, the computer readable program code means in the article of manufacture comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to detect a hand placed on the touchscreen;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer system to assign at least one activated area of the touchscreen under at least one activated area of the touchscreen under at least a portion of the hand;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer system, in response to movement of the portion of the hand across the touchscreen, to move the activated area in substantial accordance with the movement of portion of the hand;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer system to position a pointer on the touchscreen such that movement of the activated area on the touchscreen in a first direction causes the pointer to move in the first direction; and

computer readable program code means for causing the computer system to, in response to activating the activated area by at least a second portion of the hand, execute at least one command on an object or text positioned substantially under the pointer.

* * * * *